

CULTURAL LIFE IN THE 19th CENTURY

CULTURE AND PROGRESS ABROAD.

THE heavy pall that for the past few months the war in Europe has cast over everything, has at last been partially raised, and the Germans, at least, seem about to resume their usual literary activity. The Christmas holidays exerted a fair share of influence in this regard, as a Christmas in the Fatherland is nothing without a flood of books for old and young.

The mania for profusely illustrated and gorgeously bound volumes had proceeded, indeed, so far, that candid people were beginning to be alarmed as to the utter worthlessness of the matter contained in many of these magnificent exteriors, in which the printer and the binder had performed well their tasks, but wherein the author had given little else than the most tedious and

inappropriate, if not actually silly or pernicious matter, depending entirely on the external garb to allure the buyers, too many of whom were inclined to look at little else. But the most beautiful festival of the year came upon the Germans, this time, under peculiarly serious circumstances; millions of hearts and thousands of homes were too sad for anything frivolous, even in the form of Christmas gifts, and this was most clearly demonstrated in the character of the books adorning the publishers' counters and the Christmas tables. These, for all classes, were of a more serious and thoughtful character than they had been for many a festival past. An unusual number were devotional, and the widely-known *Hours of Devotion*, by Zschocke,

was issued in many and various editions, at an unusually low price.

In naming a few of the most important issues, we would allude especially to the cheap editions of all the classic or standard authors. Within a few years the publication of all of these, up to a certain date, has been thrown open to competition, and the result is a great rivalry among the publishing houses to supply the public with cheap or beautiful editions. Some of these are famous for their explanatory notes and critical introductions, as those of the Bibliographical Institute in Hildburghausen. Grote, in Berlin, is most celebrated for illustrated editions at a reasonable price; while Brockhaus, of Leipzig, is taking in the whole range of national German literature in the 18th and 19th centuries. All of these may be said to be marvels of accuracy, beauty, and cheapness, and they are virtually being scattered broadcast over the country during the last few years, and more than ever just now, under the impulse of the new birth of the Empire.

A charming work just published is *Rossmüller's Forest*; it is full of the warmest poetry and the deepest appreciation of Nature, and seems almost to enter the domain of the devotional. The charms of the forest, and the countless secrets of its marvelous life, are unveiled rather than depicted, and the wonderful results of modern investigation are given in a tone and spirit calculated to lead the reader to a consecrated study of Nature, as a relief from the stormy and cruel conflicts of man.

Another work of a most practical character for the wants of daily life, and intended to cheer and embellish it, bears the title of *Housekeepers' Lexicon*, and is dedicated to the women of Germany and their special duties and interests in the household. One volume gives "Philosophical Glances into Daily Life," another is "Counsellor in the Market," and there are three volumes devoted to treatises on the thousands of articles that ladies need to buy, giving in a most attractive style and instructive manner such a wealth of illustration and advice, and such a mass of information regarding the whole field of intelligent housekeeping in all its bearings, that one wonders where the author collected all his matter and experience. It is just the gift for the period to patient and economical housewives, and doubtless now more acceptable to them in their sorrow than the fashion journals of the day.

But we are also reminded of the wide influence that the principal one of these publications is hereafter to exert in Germany, by the New Year's address of the *Berlin Bazar* to its patrons. This great fashion journal of the world claims a circulation of a half-million of copies, and is issued in twelve different languages. It is emphatically a friend of all classes, as it consults the interests of all, rich and poor, high and low. It is no longer considered a luxury, but rather a necessity in German households, and represents all the interests of women in the line of beauty and economy of dress, endeavoring always to subject this latter to the demands of comfort and womanly propriety. For sixteen years

it has gone on increasing in usefulness and popularity, and has now become, without dispute, the fashion journal of the world, speaking to its patrons in all the languages of civilization, and moulding European taste in the interest of utility and sound common sense. It has for years been the source whence journals in the same sphere, in nearly all the capitals of the world, have drawn material and suggestions, and it now bids fair to receive the credit that it deserves. Its great effort in future will be to prove that it is far superior to any of its rivals that in Paris have so long attracted the eyes of the world to a great extent on capital borrowed from its pages.

BEETHOVEN'S CENTENNIAL engaged, for a few weeks, the attention of a large part of Germany, though the brilliancy and perfection of the grand musical demonstrations were largely interfered with by the war. It was proposed, indeed, for a while to postpone them until a more fitting season, as was the case with the festal ceremonies connected with the inauguration of the Schiller statue in Berlin. But Beethoven, in his musical career, was mainly an Austrian, and the Viennese took too little interest in the Prussian war to let it interfere with their devotion to the Shakespeare of music, who had done so much to glorify their land. But even the Viennese were not so successful as they hoped to be in the great object of their monster demonstration. They desired to secure sufficient funds to obtain a monumental statue of the great Maestro, as an ornament to their capital, and a test of their appreciation of his unrivaled powers. They scarcely received half the sum required, and some new means must now be devised to obtain the rest, or Beethoven's favorite home will be in disgrace. The result of the excitement has been a renewed study of the great musician's creations, and a close investigation of all the events of his life. His living disciples love to relate all the anecdotes that are told about his strange career and incomprehensible eccentricities, and in this way his daily walk and talk have been laid open to the world with an almost cruel minuteness. One of the most noted events connected with the celebration is the publication of a beautiful full-length engraving and portrait of the inimitable composer, by Bruckmann, of Munich and Berlin. It is said to be admirable as a likeness, and represents the "tone-master" in the midst of the landscape of Döbling, a village near Vienna, where he usually spent his summers, and where he is said to have composed his famous Pastoral Symphony. He is wrapped in his traditional mantle, and holds in his hands a roll of notes, while his eyes are directed earnestly and thoughtfully into the distance.

"BEAUTIFUL STRASBURG" is fast becoming a national device with the German people, far and near. They are killing the fatted calf, and receiving the lost and alienated one back to their bosom with every demonstration of joy and interest. Gifts of every kind are flowing into Strasburg from all quarters, and the Germans are determined to conquer it with kindness. A national interest is taken in the restoration or rather in

the replacement of the lost library, which the director seemed maliciously to devote to destruction during the days of the siege. All the great libraries of Germany are preparing to send what duplicates they can spare, and especially whatever they possess that has marked interest in Strasburg in connection with the history of Printing, and of German art in Alsace. Königsberg has just sent 40,000 volumes, and other great centres are forwarding rare books and manuscripts in abundance. Even England is appealed to to join in the movement, and the Deans of Universities and the owners of private libraries are called on to assist in the restitution of a library worthy of one of the oldest university cities of Europe. If matters keep on as well as they promise, Strasburg will soon have again one of the most valuable libraries of the Continent.

THE RUSSIAN DIPLOMATISTS seem to be turning against their old friends in France. Alexander Balche, who was three years in the Russian Embassy at Paris, has just published at Odessa a critical essay on the national malady of "Glory." In this he declares that the vanity of the French character always keeps them in the condition of mediocrity, for they are ever granting the highest prizes to men who are most successful in generous doses of phrases concerning the "glory" of France and her revolutions. How, he asks, can Rouher as statesman, Cousin as philosopher, Thiers as historian, Victor Hugo as poet, be considered other than mediocrities? But they have all met with brilliant success because they have understood, directly or indirectly, how to talk to France about her "glory," and for this appeal France never has deaf ears. This "glory" is the malady of the nation, and one that threatens to become chronic, for those who are called to heal it think only how they may use it to their advantage. That nation must indeed have a fever of glory that will ever cherish it at the expense of its own repose; this evil genius, that rules the nation and paralyzes all its good qualities and noble deeds, must be the demon of illusion and unrest. Read the proclamations of Favre, Gambetta, Victor Hugo, and Quinet; what are they but phrases about the imperishable glory of the nation? what but self-worship and empty words about their natural and sacred supremacy over all the nations of the earth? And even in the most humiliating defeats, Victor Hugo declares that the "barbarous hordes" may have the victories, but that the cultured French have all the "glory."

FINLAND is out of the world, in the opinion of most people; but, distant as it is from the great centres of civilization, it lives with the world and takes an active interest in the stirring events of the times. Finland has its "Monthly," published at Helsingfors, and in a recent number it thus discusses the great duel between France and Germany: "In the struggle between these nations, Protestantism and Catholicism are measuring their *moral* strength. Prussia and Germany are essentially Protestant, for, although a large portion of the population are of the Catholic faith, the spirit of the Reformation has penetrated the marrow of the

people, and has perceptibly affected the views of the Catholics. The influence of Protestantism is visible in the entire population. Scientific investigation is more free, the culture of all classes is more thorough, and the elements of civilization are stronger than in most nations of our day." And thus through the pages of quite a lengthy magazine article, so that we feel compelled to confess a fellow-sympathy with our worthy and thoughtful colleague, the *Finland Monthly* of Helsingfors.

ITALIAN ART-HISTORY has recently received a valuable accession to its pages, in the treatise of Riegel on the Tuscan school, in its representation of the Lord's Supper. The master-piece of Leonardo has ever been considered a model of perfection in this line, and there is no doubt that all the more important monuments of Christ surrounded by His disciples at His last meal with them, are of Tuscan origin. Leonardo was a Tuscan, although his immortal conception was executed on the walls of a monastery of Milan. In Florence there are whole series of worthy representations of the Last Supper, and although other cities, as Sienna, Padua, and Rome, possess many treasures of this kind, they almost all originate with Tuscan artists who flourished in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Riegel attributes this fact to the greater liberty of thought in Tuscany during this era, and to its intellectual advantages and political liberty, that shed their quickening influence on the church of that period, and produced mighty talents in poetry, philosophy, and art. The whole discussion of the author is a very broad and instructive one, and leaves the reader impressed with the conviction that our Saviour's last interview with His disciples collectively has been more fully conceived and sublimely illustrated by the Tuscan artists, than those of any other school in or out of Italy.

SPAIN is now having its Dante revival, in common with so many other nationalities. The immortal Florentine poet seems to revisit the earth in spirit whenever the essence of civil and religious liberty receives new strength by the struggles of the nations. The Dante literature is among the richest in bibliographical curiosities, and the greatest of these rarities is an old Spanish translation of the *Divina Commedia*. It is remarkable as being the first printed translation of this sublime poem in any modern language. To Spain belongs the glory of being foremost in making the poem accessible to the people; but the efforts of the early translators remained without much fruit, for, with three different translations in close succession, the poem had but little success, on account of the intense opposition of the Church and the threats of the Inquisition. For nearly four hundred years, therefore, the early promises were of little avail, and Dante in his Spanish garb lay smothered by the Spanish monks. But scarcely had Spain broken the chains of her recent dissolute dynasty, when Dante came forth to greet the new life of the nation, and in the short space of a year two editions of the poem have been published. The first is a reprint of the early translation of Villegas, which had be-

come extremely rare, and the Italian text is given beside the Spanish. The work is gotten up in gorgeous and very expensive style, and is illustrated with Scaramuzza's highly artistic conceptions of the Inferno. But the beauty of the outfit has made it too expensive for hosts of the friends of Dante, who have called for another cheap edition for the intelligent masses. This has just appeared, but it does not seem to give satisfaction to the lovers of the divine poet; it is a modern translation by an author of no great fame, who seems not to have had the sagacity to use effectively the generous means at his command to give to his countrymen the poem with the light of modern investigation and criticism. The Spanish people are therefore still calling for some literary magnate who shall give them this poet in a popular and attractive form, and we shall perhaps soon have another edition of Dante in that land where his writings were once so bitterly proscribed. Verily, the world moves.

THE VENERABLE GUIZOT, notwithstanding his more than fourscore years, is still actively engaged with his pen. Having finished his *Religious Meditations*, which many thought that he intended as the fitting close of his remarkable literary career, he is now devoting himself to a history of France for its rising generation. If his life is spared he may yet make this labor the most worthy monument of his career, and perform a great service for the France of the future. The youth of France, more than of any other land, seem to need a history written specially for them, in which not only their progress and their victories, but their trials and defeats, are vividly depicted to them as lessons from which to profit. The history of the last few months might be a most prolific theme for good in the hands of an experienced sage like Guizot. What has mainly been related to the youth of France hitherto as history, has much of it been intellectual poison; it has acted on the politico-moral code of the nation like the fiery absinthe on the nervous system of the young Parisians. With but few noble exceptions, modern French historians, romancers, dramatists and poets, have rivaled in impressing on the French youth the most baneful views of civic virtues, and have thrown over all the actions of France a fatal and deceptive gloss. They may have differed most widely from each other on the platforms of politics and religion, but they seem to be in the most perfect harmony in demoralizing their youth in regard to the State.

GERMAN TOURISTS IN AMERICA have not seldom made themselves obnoxious to their countrymen in the Fatherland by their wholesale endorsement of every extravagance that they meet here, and their laudations of every occurrence that comes within their observation. The bowie-knife of the Southwestern ruffian, or the explosion of a steamer on the Mississippi, were capital themes for marvelous stories of adventures in America; and the backwoods scenes have been told over and over in terms as thrilling and romantic as if located among the wilds of Africa. Some few men have made it the profession of their lives to tell these

hobgoblin and wonder stories of America, but they have fairly surfeited their readers on the other side, and disgusted their countrymen on this. The result is that a too general impression prevails among the Germans of the Continent that their fellow-countrymen on this side of the ocean have degenerated into a species of lawlessness and vagabondage, and have forgotten the virtues of their homes and their love for them. But the sympathy of the Germans in this country for their brethren engaged in conflict with their deadly enemy has been so wide-spread and deep as to give rise to a totally different impression, and a much better appreciation of them. A few weeks ago, in Berlin, the Parent Association for the relief fund for the sufferers by the war held a meeting to compare accounts. When it was announced that they had received over two million and a half of dollars, and that more than one-fifth of this had been contributed by the Germans of the United States, there was a grand shout of gratitude for their brothers over the sea, and a resolve to speak hereafter much more respectfully of those who forget not their lares and penates in a foreign land.

OUR "HEATHEN CHINEE" have been fairly outdone by heathen of another stamp, in a very recent occurrence in Florence. All visitors to that beautiful city well remember the delightful promenade known as the "*Cavalcade*," so crowded on fair afternoons with the elegant world of the Tuscan capital. In the dear hour of the night a solemn procession was seen approaching this ordinarily festive spot; the principal vehicle was an omnibus containing the body of an Oriental Prince—His Royal Highness Radschah Muharadschah, of Kolapore. The young Prince had just arrived in Florence and was taken suddenly sick, but he refused to take the remedies of the Italian physicians, preferring to dissolve costly pearls and drink the liquor.

He died in a few days, only twenty years old. His servants arrayed the body in his costliest garments, placed a necklace of pearls worth 50,000 francs around his neck, golden bracelets on his arms, and a red turban on his head. Eight of them then took his body into the omnibus, and this was followed by close carriages conveying the officers of his household, the Brahmin priest and the princely physician. His retinue had determined to burn the body, according to the national custom. The funeral pile of wood, about four feet in height, had already been prepared, and the attendants in their gala robes lifted the body from the vehicle and bore it thither. Fragrant essences were sprinkled over the wood, the body laid upon it, and several feet more of wood piled on this. The attendants then formed a circle around the pyre, crossed their arms on their breasts, and engaged in earnest prayer while the mass was being lighted. As soon as the flames burst forth the Hindoos melted into floods of tears while gazing at the solemn conflagration, and continued their oriental ceremonies until 10 o'clock the next morning. They then collected the charred bones into an urn, which the Brahmin took in his arms, and the mourners entered their carriages and returned to

their hotel. The closing ceremonies of the spectacle were witnessed by a large crowd, for the Florentines flocked to the spot as soon as they learned of the mysterious heathen ceremonies in their midst.

GOUNOD, the famous French composer, whose opera of "*Margaret*" has been the delight of the musical world, owns a modest little villa not far from the Park of St. Cloud—a region that has been fearfully exposed to the ravages of shot and shell. Fearing that his cherished home would be swept away, the brilliant composer wrote in great dejection to the Crown Prince, representing himself as an artist who was not at all responsible for the political and military strife of the day, and as one whose life had been devoted to an art the results of which had, with hard labor, secured to him the darling object of his heart—a modest rural retreat. He begged, if possible, that this might be spared to him for future comfort and labor in his sphere. The Crown Prince immediately gave orders to have the villa protected—no easy task amongst the flying shells. It was placed under the special care of the officers of that outpost, who had everything put in order and sealed under government seal, whilst on the house was placed a large placard giving the name of its owner and the princely command for its protection.

QUEEN VICTORIA is likely to get into a little trouble just now regarding the woman-question, as presented in the famous contest over the admission of women to the medical lectures of the University of Edinburgh. The rival professors on both sides of the question claim that they have her sympathy; but Professor Christenson has just publicly declared that the Queen is opposed to the measure. This is contrary to general report and belief, and an effort is being made to induce the Queen to hold up her royal hand, which has generally been shown on the side of all the reasonable demands of her sex. She has at least brought up her daughters to be very active in all that regards wom-

an's welfare. Her eldest, the Crown Princess of Prussia, seems to spend nearly all her time in Berlin in "patronizing" the institutions for alleviating women's ills, and, during the war, she has led the van in bringing women into the Sanitary Commission, and she herself wears the "Red Cross" during her duties, for hours daily. And the same, indeed, may be said of the Princess Alice, of Hesse, who is much loved by her German subjects.

IT is yet too early for us to know just how much the eclipse of Dec. 22d has taught us as to the nature of the sun. It takes the astronomers some time to compare notes and observations. The best abstract is that given in *Nature* by J. Norman Lockyer. Our unscientific readers will understand that the brilliant portion of the sun is called its *photosphere*, outside of which is a less luminous envelope called the *chromosphere*, and visible only in the case of an eclipse, when the sun's photosphere is hidden by the moon. Just what this chromosphere consists of, and how extensive it is, was the problem which the observers in Sicily and Spain tried to solve. In the case of an eclipse the eclipsing moon is seen surrounded by what is called the corona, a kind of "glory" radiating in all directions and extending to a great distance. Mr. Lockyer thinks it probable from the indications that the inner part of this corona is simply the bright chromosphere, which must have a thickness of nearly 150,000 miles. In the lower part are iron, barium, sodium, etc., in a state of vapor, while in the upper part is incandescent hydrogen, and probably a new element, even lighter than hydrogen, and which gives a peculiar green line to the spectrum of the terrestrial aurora. The part of the corona outside of the chromosphere consists of apparent radiations variously seen by observers, and due to reflections within the earth's atmosphere. Much more satisfactory results would have been obtained if the weather had not everywhere been unfavorable.